

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Stephen Harper of Canada in Cancun

March 30, 2006

President Bush. Mr. Prime Minister, thank you. This is a—we've had a day full of talks. I had a really good meeting with the Prime Minister on the choppers, flying to the Mayan ruins. We've also had a very good meeting here. We talked about a lot of subjects.

I view the relationship with Canada as a vital relationship for the United States. The relationship, of course, is defined Government-to-Government. It's also defined people-to-people, and there's a lot of people in my country who respect Canada and have great relations with Canadians, and we intend to keep it that way.

The Prime Minister, of course, was—made an emphatic case for softwood lumber. And I appreciate his steely resolve to get something done. And I assured him that our intention is to negotiate in good faith, in a timely fashion, to resolve this issue. And I appreciate your—appreciate you pushing.

We also talked about the mutual values we share: respect for human life and human dignity. And along those lines, I want to thank you very much for two things: One, the quick response that your Government and your country gave to those who suffered by Katrina. It indicates the Canadian people's desire to help humans when they suffer. I appreciate very much your trip to Afghanistan and you and your Government's support of their fledgling democracy, support of people that have been under the brutal thumb of tyrants—so brutal they wouldn't let young girls go to school—and it's representing the great Canadian tradition of really helping restore human dignity to people's lives.

The Prime Minister and I talked about a variety of subjects. We've got a lot of common interests. We've got a lot of trade between our countries—nearly half a billion dollars in—\$500 billion in the year 2005. And that trade means jobs on both sides of the border. And it's our intention to make sure that we continue to trade as freely as possible so that our people can benefit. All in all, Mr. Prime Minister, I found today to be a valu-

able day, and I want to thank you very much for your candor.

Prime Minister Harper. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

[At this point, Prime Minister Harper spoke in French, and no translation was provided.]

I'll try to repeat all of that. *[Laughter]* First of all, just to begin by saying that we had a long meeting both this morning and this afternoon, the President and I, discussing particularly global security issues of national and shared security interests.

And as you know, we're cooperating on these things in places like Afghanistan, Sudan, Haiti. Canada and the United States from time to time will disagree on particular courses of action that should be taken, and we may have different perspectives and even different interests, but there should be no doubt that Canada and the United States share very important common values—values like freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. We believe that these values are important not only for Canada and the United States, but they are the right of every people on the face of the Earth. We may disagree on how we get there, but that's the objective that we share.

We're going to meet later on in the spring to further discuss cooperation on some of these matters. We're also going to be discussing some initiatives we've taken to task some of our officials to discuss some energy and environmental concerns. We're anxious—we're in a continental security market, and we're anxious to see our officials discuss not just energy security but how we can harness energy, new energy technology, to make real progress on greenhouse gas emissions and also on pollution. So we'll have some discussions in the next few weeks along those lines.

We're going to move quickly to renew—to sign an agreement to renew NORAD, to take that to Parliament in the not-too-distant future.

Of course, we discussed softwood lumber. The President has expressed his desire to see a resolution. I certainly accept at face value the President's commitment to that. I just reminded the President that Canada's position on this is very clear, and if we don't see

a resolution, Canada is certainly going to continue to pursue all its legal options as well as enhanced support for our industry through this battle.

We talked about issues like passports, Devil's Lake, BSE, all areas where there remain some difficulties and some—[inaudible]—but I think we agreed to work together to seek some collaboration on all these fronts. In particular—and I didn't mention this in French—we've asked—we're going to be asking Secretary Chertoff and Minister Day to meet as soon as possible, at the highest levels, to do what we can to see how we can accommodate congressional legislation on passport travel issues. These present for us some pretty significant challenges, and we are concerned about the disruptions to trade and other travel that this may bring about.

And let me just end by saying as I think you heard me say a few days ago, I expressed through Ambassador Wilkins, and I've had a chance to do it—[inaudible]—how much the Government of Canada appreciates the actions taken by our allies and our friends both in the United Kingdom and in the United States in the liberation of the hostages that were held in Iraq. You know, Iraq, in particular, has been a source of some disagreement—dare I say some tension—between our two peoples, but I think this incident reminds us that when the chips are down, we all pull together and support each other. I hope that's a lesson we keep in mind for the future.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:40 p.m. at the Fiesta Americana Condesa Cancun Hotel. Prime Minister Harper referred to Minister of Public Safety Stockwell Day of Canada. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

**The President's News Conference
With President Vicente Fox of
Mexico and Prime Minister Stephen
Harper of Canada in Cancun
March 31, 2006**

President Fox. Good morning. Welcome for your interest and your presence and attendance. We have come to an end in this productive meeting, as you well know, with

bilateral meetings yesterday and today a trilateral meeting, a very productive one, followed by an enlarged meeting, trilateral-wise, with the attendance of the entrepreneurial community, business, and investment of our three countries. Consequently, we will give you full information.

I would like to ask the Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper, to make some comments.

Prime Minister Harper. Thank you. Thank you, President Fox, and ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to thank President Fox first of all. It was a pleasure to meet President Fox and President Bush to discuss issues of importance to our countries and our common will to work together.

In North America, we have an economy that is integrated; it is not necessary to differentiate our products. And we have discussed the progress accomplished in the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America, and we are committed to considering the private sector. First of all, we believe that it is an engine of competitiveness, made up of members of the private sector, that will allow us to make our economies even more competitive.

Our ministers will be working on this. They will be identifying our priorities, and they will make sure that they are followed up. We will be cooperating on issues of importance—on border security, management of urgent situations, as well as energy security. We will prepare a coordinated and exhaustive way to approach the issues of the bird flu, and we will be guided by common principles. Over the course of the next few months, we will be doing everything possible to ensure the security along our borders and to be able to move our merchandise back and forth. We will be working in the area of energy, the area of research and innovation, to be able to deal with clean technologies.

We are happy with the discussions of our trade ministers on cooperation and of the negotiation of our countries, and we encourage them to follow up with this work.

This meeting has been extremely productive. And Presidents Bush and Fox have accepted my invitation for the next summit